

Some notes on the birds of Angola

by C. Erard and R. D. Etchécopar

Received 16th July, 1970

We stayed in Angola from 4th to 17th October, 1969, spending most of our time bird watching, comparing our experiences with those of the previous two weeks, spent in South-West Africa. Time did not allow any collecting, and we could only pay attention to species with which we were already familiar or whose identification is relatively simple, so that such groups as larks, pipits and cisticolas were neglected. We could only visit a small area between Luanda and Duque de Bragança, in the "EscarPMENT Zone", the biogeographical importance of which has been discussed by Hall (1960a). The ecology of this area has been discussed by Hall (1960 a, b), Heinrich (1958) and Pinto (1965, 1966).

After consulting the ornithological literature of Angola, especially Traylor (1963) and Pinto (1965, 1966), we felt that the observations which follow were worth publishing. We follow Traylor's nomenclature.

All localities mentioned are in Traylor's gazetteer except the following: Barra do Cuanza (tributary of the Cuanza): ca $9^{\circ} 15' S.$, $13^{\circ} 10' E.$

Bom Jesus: $9^{\circ} 11' S.$, $13^{\circ} 34' E.$

Funda: ca $8^{\circ} 50' S.$, $13^{\circ} 30' E.$

Lombe: $9^{\circ} 27' S.$, $16^{\circ} 13' E.$

Lucala Falls (near Duque de Bragança) ca $9^{\circ} S.$, $16^{\circ} 20' E.$

Quiçaca: ca $9^{\circ} 15' S.$, $15^{\circ} 15' E.$

Quiçama: Reserve extending from north to south between the Rivers Cuanza and Longa, and from east to west between the route from Muxima to Capolo and the sea-coast.

Quitala: ca $9^{\circ} 15' S.$, $14^{\circ} 05' E.$

Zavula: $9^{\circ} 20' S.$, $14^{\circ} 47' E.$

Zenza: $9^{\circ} 20' S.$, $14^{\circ} 15' E.$

Aquila rapax, Tawny Eagle: According to Traylor, only known from the south-west. We saw one on 16th October, near Lombe, Malanje.

Aquila wahlbergi, Wahlberg's Eagle: We saw one on 11th October, between Funda and Cabiri, Luanda; and another the following day at a bush fire, ca 20 km. south of Luanda on the road to Barra do Cuanza.

Haliaeetus vocifer, African Fish-eagle: We found it common along the Cuanza, especially around Bom Jesus and in the Quiçama Reserve. Some were also seen in the valley of the Bingo between Funda and Cabiri, 11th October.

Torgos tracheliotus, Lappet-faced Vulture: Traylor records it only from two localities in Huila and one in Lunda. We saw an immature bird on 16th October near the Lucala Falls.

Gypobierax angolensis, Palm-nut Vulture: Widespread and abundant in the areas visited. On 11th October an almost fledged young was seen on a nest at Cabiri. Taking into account the long incubation and fledging periods, this record agrees with that of Braun (1934), of nest building in May.

Circaetus pectoralis, Black-chested Snake-eagle: Traylor records it only from the southern districts, though Pinto (1965) saw it in August at Lake Cameia, north-eastern Moxico. We saw one on 14th October between Quitala and Zenza, Cuanza Norte; one on 16th October near Lombe, Malanje; and a pair ca 5 km south-west of the Lucala Falls near Duque de Bragança.

Falco biarmicus, Lanner: Excepting Cabinda, Traylor records it only from the south, north to Benguela and northern Bihe. We saw a hunting bird on 8th October at the Baixa dos Elefantes in the Quiçama Reserve.

Falco cuvieri, African Hobby: Traylor quotes only a record of a ♀ from Dundo, Lunda, 20th November, 1956; and one by Reichenow from Cabinda, "but this is far from its normal range". We saw an adult harrassing in flight a subadult *Haliaeetus vocifer* on 7th October near the camp "pausada" in the Quiçama Reserve.

Falco chicquera, Red-necked Kestrel: We saw one in the valley of the Cuanza near Bom Jesus, 7th October. This is apparently the first record from Angola.

Francolinus adspersus, Red-billed Francolin: On 14th October, in savanna (*Strychnos-Combretum* with abundant *Combretum camporum*) ca 15 km. north-west of Catete, we saw on the roadside two examples of this distinctive species, which we had already well observed in South-West Africa. The record requires confirmation because the species was previously known only from Huila.

Stephanibyx lugubris, Lesser Black-winged Plover: Traylor records it only from Cabinda and the lower Cuanza, though Pinto (1966) found it not rare in December and February in the Luanda District. We saw a dozen around a pool in the Quiçama Reserve, 9th October.

Hoplopterus armatus, Blacksmith Plover: It had not previously recorded from the Luanda District. We regularly saw small flocks of six to twenty birds during our stay in the Quiçama Reserve (7th-10th October). They were especially frequent in the marshy meadows near the Baixa dos Elefantes in the north of the Reserve.

Hemiparra crassirostris, Long-toed Lapwing: We saw and photographed one at the Baixa dos Elefantes in the Quiçama Reserve, where it could be seen every day during our stay from 7th to 10th October. This is apparently the first record from Angola.

Limosa lapponica, Bar-tailed Godwit: It had previously been recorded near Luanda in January by Serle (1955) and on 25th July by Pinto (1966). We saw it regularly in small numbers (singles and small flocks of two to five), especially on 12th October, on the coast between Luanda and Barra do Cuanza.

Calidris canutus, Knot: It had not been reported previously from Angola, though it is known from further south. We saw it twice: ca thirty in a lagoon at Luanda on 5th October, ca forty on a beach near Cacuo on 11th October. The birds were near flocks of Sanderlings accompanied by some Common Sandpipers and single Turnstones and Ringed Plovers.

Glareola pratincola, Pratincole: Five pairs held territories on the side of a pool near the Baixa dos Elefantes in the Quiçama Reserve (7th-10th October). The birds showed an intensive lure display, and allowed a very close approach. Apparently egg-laying had not yet started, but could have been expected shortly.

Larus dominicanus, Black-backed Gull: Traylor gives it as occasional on the coast after the breeding season; Pinto (1966) as "occasionalmente" in the Luanda District from December to June. We saw two adults and one immature on 5th October at Luanda, accompanied by two *L. cirrocephalus*. We

are reasonably sure these three were *L. dominicanus*, not *fuscus*, since two weeks previously we had seen precisely similar birds on the South-West African coast, identified by local ornithologists as *dominicanus*.

We were already thoroughly familiar with the next two species at all seasons in the palaeartic. We are confident that our records, all of birds in winter dress, are entirely correct.

Chlidonias hybrida, Whiskered Tern: Traylor records it only from the Cunene River in Huila. We saw ca thirty on 5th October at Luanda; ca 100 on 10th October at Barra do Cuanza were actively fishing at the mouth of the river; and ca sixty on 11th October near Cacuaco were following the coast southward. The lack of earlier records may be due to confusion with *Sterna hirundo*.

Chlidonias nigra, Black Tern: Traylor records it as being met with occasionally in large flocks along the coast from Cabinda to Catumbella. Pinto (1966) does not mention it. On 5th October there were at least 150 in the harbour of Luanda. On 11th October we witnessed a migration southward along the coast, of between 1,000 and 2,000 (flocks of up to 350 birds) near Cacuaco. On 14th October at Luanda we could find only between thirty and fifty, with five *C. leucoptera*.

Sterna balaenarum, Damara Tern: Traylor gives it as wintering commonly in Cabinda, but elsewhere as only known by a specimen from Luanda. We saw at least 100 on 5th October on lagoons at Luanda; a similar number on 11th October on the coast near Cacuaco; and ca thirty on 14th October at Luanda. They rested on sandbanks. Relatively few were in breeding dress, with a well defined black cap. Contrary to our experience fifteen days earlier in Walvis Bay, most were probably immature.

Corythaixoides concolor, Goaway Bird: We found a nest with two almost fledged young on 9th October in the Quiçama Reserve.

Apus horus, Horus Swift: Its status in Angola is not clear. On 7th October in the Quiçama Reserve, and on 11th October near Funda, we believe we saw a few among *Apus affinis* and *caffer*, more numerous. Compared to these two, the suspected *horus* were slightly larger and plumper built, with more white on the rump. When spread, their tails appeared almost square, but some views when the birds were at a low height, immediately above us, showed them as slightly forked, the edges broader than in *caffer*.

Pseudibirundo griseopyga, Grey-rumped Swallow: We noted a dozen on 16th October among other more numerous swallows, especially *Hirundo abyssinica*, *smithii* and *rustica*, but also *angolensis*, *senegalensis* and *albogularis*, and swifts *Apus affinis* and *caffer*, in a concentration hunting insects over grasslands between Quiçaca and Cacuso, on the Cuanza Norte/Malanje boundary.

Sylvia communis, Whitethroat: It was only known by a specimen collected in Lunda in December. We saw one on 11th October near Funda on the ecotone between open grasslands and *Combretum* woodland.

Terpsiphone rufiventer, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher: The type specimen of the subspecies *ignea* probably comes from Cuanza Norte or Malanje. On 15th October we saw a bird with all the characters of this species in primary forest near Zavula in high bushes along a small river. This was our only record, and elsewhere in this forest we saw only *T. viridis*.

Ploceus pelzelni, Slender-billed Weaver: We identified a pair in a marshy clearing in forest (with coffee undergrowth) near Vila Salazar on 15th October. They were continually searching the foliage and branches of bushes like tits. The only previous records are from Cabinda and Cunga on the lower Cuanza.

Estrilda granatina, Violet-eared Waxbill: It had only been recorded in the southern half of the country. We saw a pair on 9th October in the north of the Quiçama Reserve and two others on 11th October near Funda, all in thorn scrub.

Estrilda paludicola, Fawn-breasted Waxbill: Near a small marsh in grasslands, we saw about 20 on 11th October near Funda. It does not seem to have been previously recorded in the Luanda District.

Acknowledgments: For assistance in many ways during the course of our visit we are particularly grateful to the following: Dr. A. J. Duarte of the Instituto de Investigaçao científica de Angola; Dr. V. d'Albuquerque Matos of the Servicos de Veterinaria; and to Dr. A. G. Mesquitele Lima. We wish also to thank Mr. C. W. Benson and Mrs. B. P. Hall for advice and assistance in the finalisation of the manuscript.

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The White-headed Barbet in Angola

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Received 26th August, 1970

The White-headed Barbet *Lybius leucocephalus leucogaster* (Bocage) was described from Quilenges in Angola. Traylor (1960: *Publ. Cult. Diam. Ang.* 51: 176) knew of two specimens, both ♀♀ taken in January, in addition to the type, all from Quilenges at 900 m. a.s.l. In point of fact Bocage had three specimens before him, two ♂♂ and a ♀, all adult (Dr. A. A. da Rosa Pinto, pers. comm.). Traylor (op. cit) pointed out that all other races of *L. leucocephalus* (Defilippi) were high country forms and that *leucogaster* was peculiar in coming from a fairly low lying area. He gave the wing lengths as 90 and 92 and the culmen lengths as 23 and 25 mm.

The Instituto de Investigaçao Cientifica de Angola at Sa da Bandeira has thirty-three specimens of *L. l. leucogaster*: two mounted and without data and thirty-one study specimens: twelve adult ♂♂, eleven adult ♀♀, one unsexed